



# Landscape Setting

## Topography and Vegetation

Both villages lie on chalk and loam soil, with rolling open countryside to the north and the River Itchen to the south. In the main this countryside is given over to arable farming, mostly for cereal crops, although there is also some pasture grazed by cattle. This area is punctuated by stands and groups of mature trees, sometimes along drives and lanes, in patches of woodland, or along railway embankments.

The main physical features of Kings Worthy are the valley of Springvale and the ridge above it, which affords views to the West and North. From this ridge the land slopes gently south and east towards the Itchen valley. Extensive views of the village and surrounding areas can be seen from the Stoke Charity Road, Top Field, Broadview and Eversley Park.

## Water-courses and Drainage

Some of the oldest buildings in both Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy are located in close proximity to the River Itchen. This is considered to be one of the best examples of a chalk river habitat in Europe and it is identified as a candidate Special Area for Conservation (cSAC). Its clear alkaline water is important for both recreation and biodiversity with species such as kingfishers, otters and little egrets found in the area. Established paths provide access for informal recreation along the valley, although there are no walks immediately adjacent to the riverside. The valley floor also forms part of the Itchen Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest and is typified by a shallow floodplain with braided chalk streams, unimproved grassland, meadows, carr and reed beds.

Despite its proximity to the River Itchen, Kings Worthy is separated from the watercourse by the A33, which forms an abrupt barrier. Abbots Worthy however, has distinct visual and physical links with the river, with Mill Lane leading directly down to the river banks.

The permeable nature of the underlying chalk in the area generally leads to a lack of water on the surface, but can result in flooding after periods of exceptional rainfall when the water table reaches the surface. This happened in 2000/1 in Kings Worthy, when Springvale Road and some adjoining properties were flooded. Local people are concerned that any development on the west side of Springvale Road would not only be at risk of flooding, but might also increase run off and aggravate the problems for neighbouring properties.



River Itchen at Abbots Worthy

## Vegetation

There are fine specimens of many native broadleaf deciduous trees within the area and mature hedgerows line the fields and roads. A comprehensive survey of rural hedgerows undertaken in 2000 and updated in 2005 indicated the presence of the following species:

*Indigenous Tree and Hedgerow Species associated with the countryside around Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy*

Alder Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*)  
Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)  
Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)  
Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)  
Bird cherry (*Prunus padus*)  
Common oak (*Quercus robur*)  
Crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*)  
Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)  
Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)  
Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)  
Elm (*Ulmus glabra*)  
Field maple (*Acer campestre*)  
Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*)  
Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)  
Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)  
Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)  
Wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)  
White poplar (*Populus alba*)  
Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*)  
Yew (*Taxus baccata*)



Abbots Worthy Mill from Itchen Way

To the southeast, Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy are bounded by the floodplain of the River Itchen, as it flows in its braided winding channels through the surrounding water meadows. Here there are reed beds and meadows rich in wild flowers and water-loving plants and water tolerant native trees are more common.



# Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy Village Design Statement



Beech trees at The Woodlands, Church Lane

*Indigenous Tree and Hedgerow Species associated with the River Itchen at Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy*

- Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)
- Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)
- Beech (*Fagus sylvaticus*)
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Crack willow (*Salix fragilis*)
- Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
- Goat willow (*Salix caprea*)
- Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Common oak (*Quercus robur*)
- Osier (*Salix viminalis*)
- Poplar (*Populus sp*)
- White willow (*Salix alba*)



Beech avenue St Swithuns Way, Abbots Worthy

The oldest part of Kings Worthy developed on the slightly higher ground around St Mary's Church. This area is above the flood level of the river, and here there are more fine trees, including more ornamental varieties. Owners of the Victorian villas in both Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy planted a variety of species that are now well-established and of significant stature, contributing greatly to the street scene. These include beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), yew (*Taxus baccata*) holm oak (*Quercus ilex*), Scots pines (*Pinus sylvestris*) chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), larch (*Larix europaea*), lime (*Tilia spp.*) and cedars (*Cedrus spp.*), often along the edges of the roads and drives.

Figure 2 on page 11 illustrates the location of important groups of trees and areas of vegetation. These include:

## Kings Worthy

- The 'avenue' along the A33 Basingstoke Road
- Trees at the A33/London Road junction, adjacent to Victoria Cottages
- Trees along frontage of Kings Worthy Court, London Road
- Lime trees within St Marys Church yard
- Holm oak, pine and chestnuts within private gardens of Church Lane
- Beech trees at The Woodlands, off Church Lane
- Beech trees at Hinton Fields
- Mixed trees (including pine) to north of Kings Worthy Primary School
- Mixed avenue (including pine) on Hinton House Drive
- Holm oaks & sycamores at junction of Church Lane/London Road, Kings Worthy
- Ornamental trees within the grounds of properties on the London Road and Church Lane
- Group of pines on Springvale Road



Trees by A33

## Abbots Worthy

- Yew, beech, lime and sycamore at A33/B3047 junction at Kings Worthy Grove
- Trees within the grounds of Abbotsworthy House (yew, holly, sycamore, lime)
- Beech avenue on Long Walk, St Swithuns Way, to south of Abbotsworthy House
- Trees associated with River Itchen on both sides of A33 Basingstoke Road
- Woodland on northern boundary of Park Lane (yew, beech, sycamore, maple, hazel, ash)

There is also a group of trees on the London Road at Peeks Field, which is not characteristic of the area. The coniferous trees are not indigenous and detract from the streetscene, blocking views to the church.

## Where village and country meet: Important Views

Figure 2 illustrates important views around Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy.

## Kings Worthy

### To/from the West

The topography and the preponderance of groups of mature trees mean that much of Kings Worthy is well integrated with the landscape when viewed from the west, as much of the modern part of the Kings Worthy lies within the valley of Springvale. Here, building development is also bounded by the wooded embankment of the main London to Southampton railway line. However, glimpses of the village can be gained from the Top Field and important views out to the countryside can be gained from parts of Springvale Road and from Nations Hill.

### To/from the North

Again, the rolling topography around Kings Worthy restricts views, however panoramic views of the village can be obtained from the Stoke Charity Road, close to the railway line. Important glimpses of the open countryside to the north of the village can also be obtained from Lovedon Lane and the burial ground. To the north of Kings Worthy, the farmland separating the village from South Wonston helps to segregate and define the distinct identities of the two villages. It is therefore important to retain the open rural character of this area.

### Beech trees at Hinton Fields





*View from Top Field*

*To/from the East*

From the north-east Kings Worthy is approached along the A33 through open farmland, and the topography and trees generally restrict views. However, south of the disused Alton railway, there are filtered views from the A33, through an informal avenue of mature trees. Apart from being attractive landscape features in their own right, these trees help integrate the village with its surroundings and it is important that they be retained. On the south-eastern edge of Kings Worthy, there are long panoramic views out from Eversley Park to the wider countryside.



*Open farmland, A33 & Lovedon Lane*

*To/from the South*

Views to the south of Kings Worthy are partially restricted by the vegetation and water courses of the Itchen valley, however recent tree clearance has opened up attractive views towards Easton Down from the A33.

The scenic aspect of the area between the Cart and Horses Public House and Lovedon Lane acts as a buffer to the new developments at the top of the rise. It also helps to integrate the village into the surrounding landscape, providing a rural approach to the Kings Worthy Conservation Area. Moreover, this attractive open area helps to segregate and define the distinct identities of Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy. It is therefore important to retain the open rural character of this area.

**Abbots Worthy**

Views to and from Abbots Worthy are generally limited, due to the enclosure given by the mature trees both within the village

and along the floor of the Itchen valley. Glimpses from Mill Lane, the Itchen Way and the A33 across the Itchen Valley towards Easton Down contribute to the rural setting of the village. Longer distance views eastwards can also be obtained from St Swithun's Way, adjacent to Worthy Park Home Farm.



*Trees on A33 & London Rd*

**Landmarks and Views within the Settlements**

Within the Kings Worthy Conservation Area, the Cart and Horses Inn, Kings Worthy Court, the Reading Room and the church and its lych gate are all important focal features, especially when viewed from the London Road. There are also important views of the church and Kings Worthy Court from Church Lane.

To the north-west of Kings Worthy, the disused Winchester-Alton railway embankment forms an important gateway, subdividing the Springvale area in two. Springvale Road passes under the bridge and the well vegetated embankment provides enclosure to the surrounding area. The Kim Bishop footpath passes along the top of this embankment.

Within Abbots Worthy, the Abbots Worthy Mill forms a local landmark to walkers on the Itchen Way, marking a gateway to the village. Nearby, Abbotsworthy House also forms an



*St Mary's Church*



*Kings Worthy Court from London Rd*

important landmark to walkers on the St Swithun's Way. To the north of the village, the Old Rectory forms a gateway landmark on the A33.

Views within Abbots Worthy are marred by overhead telephone cables.



*Springvale Road railway embankment*



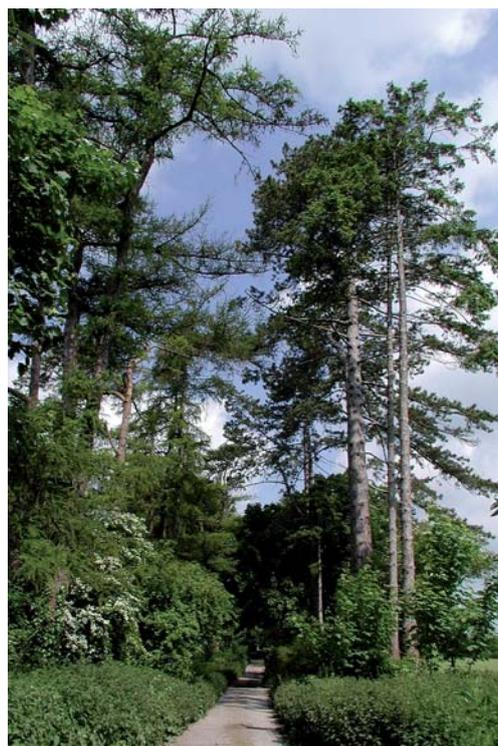
## Open Spaces

The main recreational open spaces within Kings Worthy are at Eversley Park, Hinton Park, Broadview, Willis Way and Springvale Village Green. Smaller grassed areas within residential areas, such as Fryers Close, Mountbatten Place and Lynn Way also provide important spaces for children to play close to home. The recreation ground at Peeks Field is also a public facility but as it is in private ownership, its accessibility in the long term cannot be guaranteed. At the southern end of the village there is also a wooded area and adjacent field to the west of Hinton House Drive. For many years, this area has been well used for dog walking and other informal recreation; a well-used footpath crosses the land, but it has no official status.

In addition to the recreational open spaces there are a number of open areas that are important for their visual amenity. The triangular piece of land in front of the church, for example, provides it with an important setting whilst the open grassed areas at the junctions of London Road and the B3047 off the A33 Basingstoke Road provide attractive gateways to both Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy. Castle Rise, off Lovedon Lane in Kings Worthy, provides an open area of grassed embankment.



Church triangle



Hinton Drive

### Design Guidelines

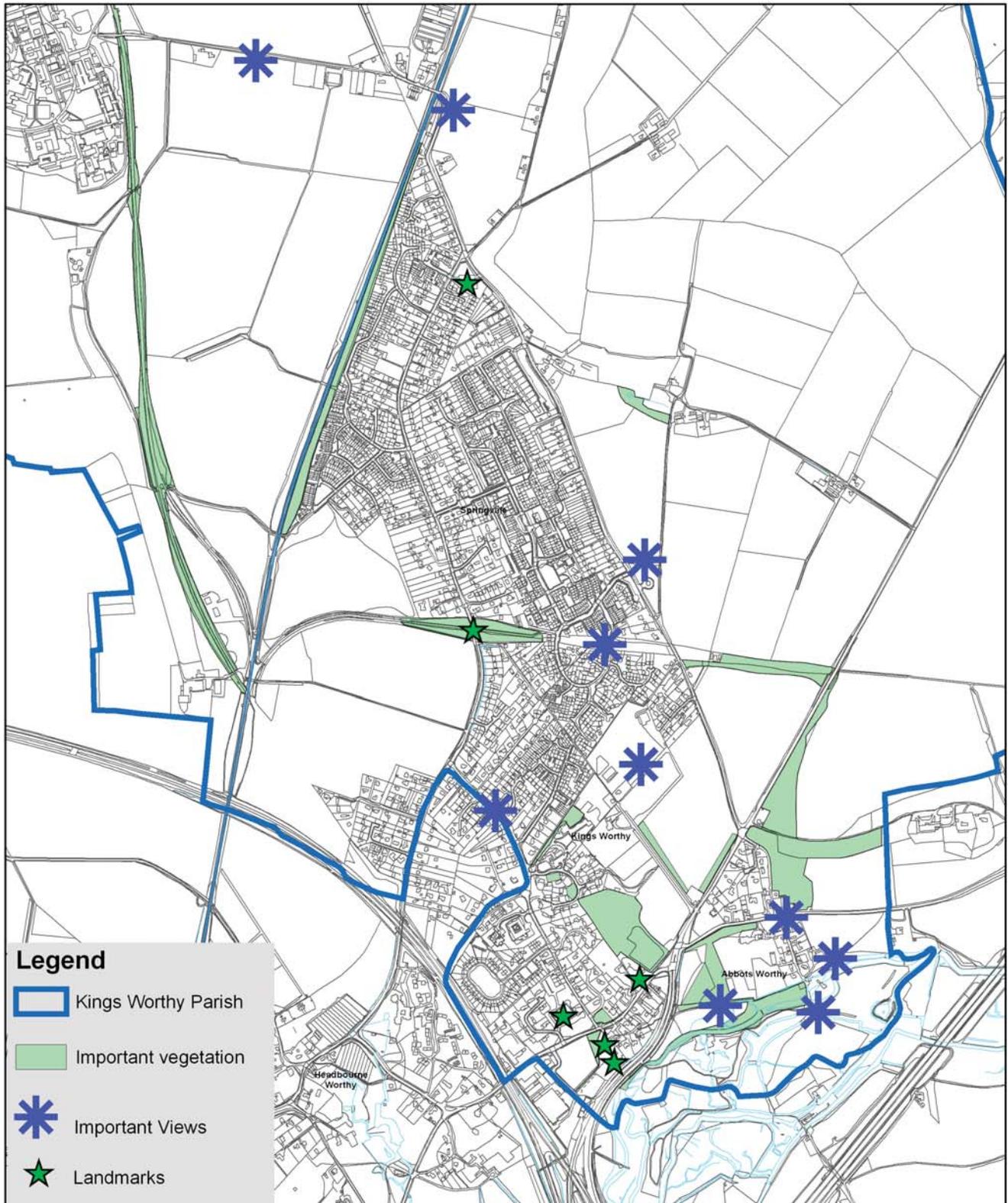
- D2 Important views out of and into the villages, as shown on Figure 2 should be protected (*DP.4, HE.4*)
- D3 The views towards the local landmarks shown on Figure 2 should be protected and where possible enhanced (*DP.4, HE.4*)
- D4 Opportunities should be taken to provide public open space within both villages, both for formal play and sport and for informal visual and recreational amenity (*DP.5, RT.1, RT.2, RT.4, RT.5, RT.6*)
- D5 The open, rural character of the following areas is important to the setting of the villages and should be conserved (see Figure 2):
  - The woodland and farmland between the Cart and Horses Public House and Lovedon Lane (*CE.2, CE.3, CE.5*)
  - The open farmland between Kings Worthy and South Wonston (*CE.5*)
  - The open farmland to the north-east of Lovedon Lane (*CE.5*)
- D6 New building should be restricted to sites within the village envelope, to preserve the open fields around the village and minimise the impact on traffic flows within the village. (*H.3, T.1*)
- D7 The continuity of the villages' mature trees and hedgerow structure should be encouraged, especially the groups of mature trees and hedgerows shown in Figure 2, which contribute to the streetscene and integration of the villages with their countryside setting. (*DP.3, DP.4, CE.5*)
- D8 New planting should use locally sourced indigenous species or reflect Victorian specimen planting as appropriate. (*DP.3, DP.4*)
- D9 Any future development, particularly in the Springvale Road area should take account of the risk of flooding and should avoid exacerbating the problem. (*DP.8*)
- D10 The landscape character and biodiversity of the River Itchen should be conserved. (*DP.4, CE.5, CE.7*)

### Additional goals

- G5 Trees and vegetation should be actively managed to conserve the leafy, secluded character of both Abbots Worthy and Kings Worthy and to enhance biodiversity.
- G6 The conifers on Peeks Field should be removed to allow views through to the church from London Road. Alternative planting with deciduous trees should be considered.
- G7 A low level native hedgerow along the western boundary of St Mary's church yard and Peek's Field should be considered, to improve the visual relationship between the two open spaces.



**Figure 2: Important Views, Landmarks & Vegetation**



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